

What I know about the Death of Sok Setha Mony

In my last statement, I set out details about what I know of the death of Sok Setha Mony.

Shortly after the judge was killed, I recall that there were rumours about the coincidence of the justice reform that I proposed and his death. He was killed just after the justice reform was announced, but there had been no formal allegations against me that I was responsible for the killing until January 2006.

On 25 December 2005, Hoc Lundy openly declared war against me at a meeting. He vowed that he would have me stood down from my position and that he would melt me like water. This was announced in newspapers and everybody in Phnom-Penh knew about it!

On 11 January 2006, I was stood down from the position of Police Commissioner of Phnom Penh and given a notional promotion to be the undersecretary of the State of the Ministry of Interior.

About 2 weeks later, 12 of the Phnom Penh police were arrested including one of my close associates Ly Rasy and his subordinate Hang Vuthy. They were charged with killing of Sok Setha Mony, and attempted murder of the Military police commander Sao Sokha and the court prosecutor Ok Savuth and the killing of Mrs Doueng Sophaep, a business woman.

Those people were kept in the Ministry of Interior for a week and tortured by the people of Mo Chito and Hoc Lundy. I could not do anything to save them. Being the undersecretary, I had no authority whatsoever. I was not even provided an office in the Ministry.

It was not until March 2006 that they were allowed access to a lawyer and their lawyer subsequently told me that these 12 people were forced to say under torture that I was responsible for those killings or attempted murders.

I went to see Hun Sen about this. He told me not to worry about it. He said that unless he personally ordered for my arrest, nobody else could touch me. He said that he would tell Hoc Lundy not to do it. He protected me because he knew that I had nothing to do with those incidents and that he himself had issue with Hoc Lundy.

Around the same time, I was told by one of Hun Sen's close friends that Hun Sen was suspicious of me and he believed that I had been communicating with the opposition parties behind his back.

In late June/early July, Hun Sen confronted me asking me whether it was true that I had been privately liaising with the opposition parties and the human rights organizations. He said that he would be very unhappy if I had. I had to deny it at the time. Since I was warned by his friend, I had been very careful and attempted to suspend all communications with the opposition parties. I think Hun Sen found out after I left for Malaysia that I continued to have communications with the opposition parties. This resulted in him taking the action against me by standing me down. One of the the opposition activists who helped with the communications seems to have disappeared.

I did not kill Sok Setha Mony nor do I know who actually killed him. There have been different theories about it though. I conducted the investigation as part of my duties

when somebody was killed. I found out that he had made a lot of enemies in his life. Just prior to my completing the investigation, the military police informed me that they had found the killers who were linked to the CFF.

I queried their finding and told them what I discovered about the judge's private life, they said that it had nothing to do with his death and confirmed that the killers were the CFF.

The military police are independent of my Department and they were more powerful than my Department, I had no right to question their finding or have it reviewed.

I reported my concern to Hoc Lundy. He said to me that since the Military Police had done the investigation and released their finding, don't worry about it any more. He asked me to close the file.

The truth is that I had never had much dealing with Sok Satha Mony, but I respected him and I had no issue with him. One of the accusations against me was that I went to see the judge one day before his death and asked him to reverse a decision. That was rubbish. I never had the need to ask any judge to reverse a decision. The justice reform that I proposed was for the purpose of eradicating the corruption in the legal system. It would go totally against my principle to try to influence the decision of the judiciary. There was no reason why I wanted the judge killed. In fact the accusation is based on an anonymous letter undated which I have a copy of!!

People might query why I chose not to go back to Cambodia to defend myself in court if I were innocent. Going back to Cambodia to face its justice system is really not an option. In Cambodia, one cannot get justice when it comes to matters involving senior ranking government officials such as Hun Sen and Hoc Lundy. There is no government transparency. They would have me killed before I was able to front up the court. Furthermore, with the corruption being part of the court system, I doubt that I would get a good hearing/trial in court.

I categorically deny the charges that have been brought against me. I have never committed the crimes that they accused me of. Anybody who has lived in or have a real knowledge about Cambodia would know that those accusations are politically motivated. They are there as propaganda to influence the public opinion and to cover up the wrongdoings on their part. I would be prepared to go to a trial for the accusations they have now made against me in any other court system except in Cambodia or Vietnam. You can easily buy a conviction under the Cambodian justice system. This has been borne out by the outcome of today's trial in absentia. I am not a bit surprised about the result. I feel pity for Hun Sen and Hoc Lundy who seems so desperate to cover their track. If they were innocent, they did not have to do what they did. The desperate attempt by them to try me on the trumped up charges only goes to show that they really has something to hide. It worries them that I will reveal everything that they have done to Cambodia and to the Cambodian people. I firmly believe that justice will prevail at the end of the day. The world will know soon who is right and who is wrong.

Heng Pov
18 September 2006